## In The Claims:

The claims are amended as follows:

1-28. Cancelled

29. (Currently amended) A method of inhibiting degradation of a natriuretic peptide present in a subject, comprising:

selecting said subject on the basis of a diagnosis of congestive heart failure, acute coronary syndrome or acute myocardial infarction;

performing an assay to <u>specifically</u> detect a natriuretic peptide in a sample obtained from said subject, wherein said natriuretic peptide is BNP<sub>77-108</sub> or BNP<sub>1-108</sub>;

determining a treatment regimen based in part on the presence or amount of said natriuretic peptide; and

administering one or more inhibitors of prolyl-specific dipeptidyl peptidase ("DPP") to said subject in an amount sufficient to inhibit degradation of the natriuretic peptide by prolyl-specific DPP.

- 30. (Original) A method according to claim 29, wherein the inhibitor(s) of prolyl-specific DPP comprise a dipeptide analogue comprising an aza, azetadine, boronate, hydroxylamine, or phosphonate moiety.
- 31. (Original) A method according to claim 29, wherein the inhibitor(s) of prolyl-specific DPP comprise an antibody or fragment thereof.
- 32. (Currently amended) A method for increasing the level of natriuretic peptide function in a subject, comprising:

selecting said subject on the basis of a diagnosis of congestive heart failure, acute coronary syndrome or acute myocardial infarction;

performing an assay to <u>specifically</u> detect a natriuretic peptide in a sample obtained from said subject, wherein said natriuretic peptide is <u>BNP<sub>77-108</sub></u> or <u>BNP<sub>1-108</sub></u>;

determining a treatment regimen based in part on the presence or amount of said natriuretic peptide; and

administering one or more inhibitors of prolyl-specific DPP to said subject in an amount sufficient to inhibit degradation of the natriuretic peptide in said subject by prolyl-specific DPP.

33. (Original) A method according to claim 32, wherein one or more additional molecules selected from the group consisting of inhibitors of neutral endopeptidase and natriuretic peptides are also administered to said subject.

## 34-42. Cancelled

43. (Currently amended) A method of treatment, comprising:

selecting said subject on the basis of a diagnosis of congestive heart failure, acute coronary syndrome or acute myocardial infarction;

performing an assay to <u>specifically</u> detect a B-type natriuretic peptide in a sample obtained from said subject, wherein said natriuretic peptide is BNP<sub>77-108</sub> or BNP<sub>1-108</sub>;

determining a treatment regimen based in part on the presence or amount of said natriuretic peptide; and

administering one or more inhibitors of prolyl-specific DPP to said subject in an amount sufficient to inhibit degradation of B-type natriuretic peptide in said subject by prolyl-specific DPP.

- 44. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 43, wherein the inhibitor(s) of prolyl-specific DPP comprise a dipeptide analogue comprising an aza, azetadine, boronate, hydroxylamine, or phosphonate moiety.
- 45. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 43, wherein the inhibitor(s) of prolyl-specific DPP comprise an antibody or fragment thereof.

- 46. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 43, wherein one or more additional molecules selected from the group consisting of inhibitors of neutral endopeptidase and natriuretic peptides are also administered to said subject.
- 47. (Previously presented) The method of claim 29, wherein said performing step comprises: forming a complex between said natriuretic peptide and at least one antibody, wherein said antibody comprises a detectable label; and detecting said complex.
- 48. (Previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein said performing step comprises: forming a complex between said natriuretic peptide and at least one antibody, wherein said antibody comprises a detectable label; and detecting said complex.
- 49. (Previously presented) The method of claim 43, wherein said performing step comprises:
  forming a complex between said natriuretic peptide and at least one antibody, wherein said antibody comprises a detectable label; and detecting said complex.